

King's Children.

M. R. O. NOTES. NO. 11.

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SUBJECT: JAPAN, THE SUNRISE KINGDOM.

(1) History: the early history of this kingdom is purely fabulous. The authentic history begins about 600 years B. C.

Two hundred years after Christ, Corea was conquered by the Japanese, and a large migration of the Coreans to Japan followed.

Buddhism was introduced into the Empire by the Coreans. The faith spread silently and rapidly. Doctors, diviners and astronomers from Corea moved to Japan and brought missionaries with them. Thus was the Asiatic civilization, with its art, science, literature and religion introduced in Japan, changing the character and history of Japan forever.

The Mikado and his subjects attempted to suppress the spread of Buddhism, but it grew in face of all opposition and in 593 A. D. was granted perfect toleration, since which time it has continued to grow and is to day, one of the national religions of Japan, the other being Shintoism.

Japan was first made known to the Europeans by Marco Polo. This knowledge was extended by the Dutch and Portuguese traders during sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Dutch were *Protestant*; the Portuguese, *Catholic*.

The Portuguese first visited the country in 1542. Catholic Missionaries or Jesuits soon followed; St. Francis Xavier came in 1549. (If possible read the biography of this remarkable man.) These Jesuits were kindly received at the first, and made many converts, even among the nobles, to their faith; and in 1582 sent an embassy to the Pope at Rome, to assure him of their allegiance to the Catholic church.

The church continued to grow, it met the favor of the Mikado because its purpose was the destruction of Buddhism. Twelve-thousand converts in two years.

In 1598 the Dutch opened commercial intercourse with the Japanese and the port of Hirado was granted them in 1609.

The Portuguese being well settled in Japan, began to usurp authority, and even act in defiance to the Japanese government. This awakened mistrust on the part of the natives.

Their purpose in the land was betrayed by a Spaniard in a reply to Taiko-Sama. "We send priests to win the people, and then send troops to join the native Christians, and the conquest is easy."

Hid-e-yoshi began to persecute the native Christians because they opposed his tyranny and finally banished the Portuguese

and Jesuit missionaries on account of their defiance of his government.

This edict was renewed in 1596, and persecution began. Twenty-three priests massacred in one day at Nagasaki, churches and school houses were destroyed and it was declared *treason to teach or hold Christianity*. The Portuguese were deprived of their privilege of free access to the Empire and were confined to the island of Deshima.

The Christians, after the horrible massacre of 1622, attempted to overthrow the imperial throne. The plot was discovered in 1637 and persecution was renewed with increased severity.

The Portuguese were forever banished from Japan and all natives and Japanese ships were forbidden to leave the country under severe penalties.

In 1641 the Dutch were forced to abandon their trading post at Hirado and move to Deshima, where for the next two centuries, under rigid conditions, they enjoyed a monopoly of the trade with Japan.

Christianity, thus being stamped from the country they again devoted themselves to their old faiths. The Shoguns favored Buddhism, while the Mikadoes supported Shintoism, and for the next two centuries Japan rigidly excluded herself from the rest of the world.

THE OPENING OF JAPAN.

With the details of the opening of the port of Japan, the causes, purpose and results you can make yourself familiar by referring to any good history of the U.S.

RESULTS OF THIS OPENING.

It has been said, that there has never been a civilized nation more open to the acceptance of anything new, that they find to be good than the Japanese.

(1) Progress of Japan toward Western civilization.

(2) Changes of population in one generation.

(a) Intellectual, social, political, religious.

(b) Government, education, religion.

(c) In individual and in family life.

(d) In trade and in manners.

(e) Army, navy, finance, political economy.

"Nothing as was thirty years ago except the natural scenery;" "the Light of Asia is fading and waning; but while it is at its sun-set, the Light of the World is rising on that island empire."

(f) The character of the present Mikado.

(g) Modern improvements.

Notice the following changes, and their bearing upon Protestant Missions:—

(1) The fall of the dual dynasty.

(2) The overthrow of Feudalism.

(3) Adoption of new calendar; all dates now reckoned from Christ.

(4) The seventh day as a weekly rest day instead of fifth.

(5) Disestablishment of Buddhism.

(6) Reconstruction of army, navy and educational systems.

(7) Granting of absolute toleration to Christians.

(8) The acceptance of Christianity as a state religion.

MISSIONS IN JAPAN.

The work was opened in 1859. The first converts were among the *Samurai*, who were and are the intellectual leaders. These Christian Samurai are very active and are making themselves felt in Japan. They have furnished already a cabinet minister, Chief Justice of Supreme Court, several Vice-ministers, Speakers and Professors in the Imperial University.

Says Dr. Green: The high degree of intellectual activity must be borne in mind in any attempt to estimate the religious forces of Japan."

The following figures will show the present religious forces of the Empire:—

Number of Foreign Missionaries	1132.
No. of native pastors and evangelists	842.
No. of members,	39,000.
No. of Protestant churches,	365.
No. of Buddhist Temples,	72,039.

SOCIETIES.

The Y. M. C. A., Y. P. S. C. E., W. C. T. U. and others, tho yet in their infancy are making themselves felt for good; the work of the Bible Distribution Society is especially to be observed.

RECENT EVENTS.

1. War with China.
2. Tidal Wave.
3. The visit of the American Board.

THE JAPANESE PROBLEM.

Says Rev. A. Clark: Japan has come to the problem stage; problems great and grave have arisen, calling for great wisdom and patience, wakeful nights, earnest prayer and above all for Christ-like love. The compound problem is: How shall we get the Gospel message into the ears and hearts of the forty million who have never heard it, and how shall we persuade the other two million who have heard it to accept it? In America two out of every three are church members; in Japan only one out of one thousand is,

The bright days of youth are the seed time; every thought of your intellect, every emotion of your heart, every word of your tongue, every principle you adopt, every act you perform is a seed, whose good or evil fruit will prove the bliss or bané of your after life.—*Henry A. Wise.*